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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: OREP, PGOV, PREL, SNAR, BF
SUBJECT: CODEL ENGLISH VISIT TO THE BAHAMAS

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: CONGRESSMAN GLENN ENGLISH ACCOMPANIED BY CONGRESSMAN AL MCCANDLESS, STAFF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, AND CUSTOMS, COAST GUARD AND DEA REPRESENTATIVES VISITED NASSAU DECEMBER 11-13 TO LOOK INTO U.S.-BAHAMIAN NARCOTICS INTERDICTION ACTIVITIES. THE CODEL HAD CORDIAL AND PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS WITH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER/FOREIGN MINISTER CLEMENT MAYNARD, ATTORNEY GENERAL ADDERLEY, AND PRIME MINISTER PINDLING. THE GROUP ALSO MET WITH POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS AND TOURED THE ROYAL BAHAMAS DEFENCE FORCE BASE AT CORAL HARBOUR. CONGRESSMAN ENGLISH'S MESSAGE TO THE BAHAMIANS WAS THAT THE UP-COMING CERTIFICATION PROCESS WILL BE A DIFFICULT ONE AND THE BAHAMAS MUST WORK QUICKLY AND INTELLIGENTLY TO IMPRESS UPON THE CONGRESS THE OUTSTANDING COOPERATION IT IS PROVIDING TO THE U.S. IN THE DRUG WAR. ENGLISH BLUNTLY TOLD BOTH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND THE PRIME MINISTER THAT IN HIS OPINION SOMEONE WAS GOING TO BE DECERTIFIED THIS TIME AROUND, AND URGED THE BAHAMIANS TO MAINTAIN A HIGH LEVEL OF COOPERATION WITH THEIR U.S. COUNTERPARTS. ENGLISH EXPRESSED VIEW THAT U.S. AND GCOB SHOULD HAVE A JOINT STRATEGY IN PLACE BEFORE MARCH 1.

THE CODEL'S TRIP WAS APPARENTLY ORCHESTRATED BY TWO FORMER HILL STAFFERS WHO ARE NOW LOBBYISTS FOR THE GCOB. DURING THE CODEL'S MEETINGS WITH BAHAMIAN OFFICIALS FORMER ENGLISH STAFFER TED MEHL, ACCOMPANIED BY BOBBY MILLS, A FORMER SEN. DECONCINI STAFFER WHO WITH MEHL IS EMPLOYED BY PARRY AND ROMANI ASSOCIATES, JOINED THE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE BAHAMIANS. (MILLS WAS EVEN ALLOWED INTO THE RESTRICTED SESSION WITH PRIME MINISTER PINDLING.) POST HAS LEARNED THAT MEHL'S FIRM EVEN PREPARED THE BRIEFING CHARTS AND SLIDES, WHICH WERE USED BY ATTORNEY GENERAL ADDERLEY IN AN ATTEMPT TO MISREPRESENT TO THE CODEL THE U.S. RESPONSE TO THE BAHAMIAN DRUG INTERDICTION STRATEGY PROPOSAL AS WELL AS THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF JOINT VS. UNI-LATERAL BAHAMIAN DRUG SEIZURES. END SUMMARY.

4. EMBASSY DISCUSSIONS: THE CODEL BEGAN ITS VISIT

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Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2013/01/11 : CIA-RDP90M00005R001000080001-7

AT THE EMBASSY WITH A MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND COUNTRY TEAM. DISCUSSIONS CENTERED PRINCIPALLY ON OPBAT OPERATIONS, WITH CONGRESSMAN ENGLISH APPARENTLY PRIMED TO PUSH FOR CONTROL OF OPBAT SHIFTING TO C3I IN MIAMI, A MOVE AMBASSADOR AND COUNTRY TEAM FIRMLY OPPOSE. DURING THE SUBSEQUENT TOUR OF THE POST'S OPBAT CENTER, AND MID-AFTERNOON VISIT TO THE OAKES FIELD OPBAT SITE HOWEVER, WE THINK WE WERE ABLE TO CLEAR UP SOME OF HIS INITIAL CONCERNS ABOUT INADEQUATE COORDINATION WITH MIAMI AND DEMONSTRATE THAT IN FACT USG RESOURCES ARE BEING USED IN THE MOST EFFECTIVE MANNER POSSIBLE AT THIS TIME. THE CONGRESSMAN SAID, HOWEVER, THAT HE WOULD BE HOLDING HEARINGS THIS YEAR ON THE WHOLE ISSUE OF JOINT COAST GUARD, CUSTOMS AND DEA OPERATIONS TO MAKE SURE THAT AGENCIES REALIZED THERE IS NO ROOM FOR TURF BATTLES THAT COULD HINDER THE APPREHENSION OF SUSPECTED TRAFFICKERS OR RESULT IN THE MISUSE OF EXPENSIVE AIR AND SEA RESOURCES.

5. MAYNARD MEETING: THE CODEL PAID BRIEF COURTESY CALL ON DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER/FOREIGN MINISTER CLEMENT MAYNARD WHO EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE CODEL WOULD RECOGNIZE THE LEVEL OF THE BAHAMIAN GOVERNMENT'S COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. MAYNARD SPOKE GLOWINGLY OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO PERMIT U.S. RESOURCES TO HAVE FULL ACCESS TO BAHAMIAN WATER AND AIR SPACE AND EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE INVESTIGATIVE

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
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SUBJECT: CODEL ENGLISH VISIT TO THE BAHAMAS

ASSISTANCE THE DEA IS GIVING TO BAHAMIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL. HE TOLD THE CONGRESSMEN THAT THE BAHAMAS WOULD CONTINUE TO ASSIST US AND HOPED THAT THE NEW AEROSTAT BALLOON SCHEDULED TO OPERATE OUT OF GEORGE TOWN THIS SPRING WOULD PROVE EVEN MORE EFFECTIVE IN IDENTIFYING AND HELPING TO CAPTURE TRAFFICKERS. THE CONGRESSMEN RAISED WITH MAYNARD THE ISSUE OF ALLOWING A U.S. AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER TO WORK TEMPORARILY IN NASSAU'S FLIGHT SERVICE CENTER DURING AN UPCOMING PULSE EXERCISE. MAYNARD SAID THE CONGRESSMEN SHOULD REALIZE THAT HE HAD A PROBLEM SOMETIMES IN ACCEDING AS QUICKLY TO OUR REQUESTS AS WE WOULD WISH BECAUSE OPPOSITION POLITICAL FIGURES COULD HAMMER HIM FOR "SELLING OUR SOVEREIGNTY". NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID, THE CONGRESSMEN COULD BE ASSURED HE WOULD ALWAYS ATTEMPT TO FIND A WAY AROUND ANY PROBLEM IN ORDER TO GRANT ANY REASONABLE REQUEST THAT WOULD ACHIEVE OUR JOINT INTERDICTION GOALS. (COMMENT: THE REQUEST HAD BEEN PRESENTED TO THE MFA SINCE NOVEMBER 25. WE LEARNED LATER ON DECEMBER 13 THAT IT HAD BEEN TURNED DOWN BY THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND THAT THIS WAS KNOWN TO MAYNARD EVEN PRIOR TO HIS MEETING WITH CODEL.)

6. ATTORNEY GENERAL- DOG AND PONY SHOW: AFTER LEAVING MAYNARD, THE CODEL MET WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL ADDERLEY WHO FILLED HIS CONFERENCE ROOM WITH KEY ENFORCEMENT FIGURES SUCH AS CHIEF OF POLICE BONAMY AND COMMODORE SMITH, DEFENCE FORCE COMMANDER. ADDERLEY WAS ON HIS BEST BEHAVIOR; FRIENDLY, CORDIAL, JOKING AT TIMES AND SPEAKING IN SUBDUED STRAIGHTFORWARD MANNER ABOUT THE BAHAMIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORT. (AFTER CODEL MET LATER WITH PM, PM'S PR MEN GRABBED THE GCOB MFA ESCORT TO SEEK ASSURANCES THAT ADDERLEY HAD, IN FACT, BEEN ON HIS BEST BEHAVIOR.) THE CODEL WAS BRIEFED FIRST BY AMCIT JACK CUSACK, ADDERLEY'S NARCOTICS ADVISOR, WHO GAVE A SLIDE PRE-

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Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2013/01/11 : CIA-RDP90M00005R001000080001-7

SENTATION PURPORTING TO SHOW HOW THE BAHAMAS WAS ASSISTING, BUT WHICH WAS IN FACT A THINLY DISGUISED ATTEMPT TO SLAM THE U.S. FOR "REJECTING" (ADDERLEY'S EARLIER PHRASE) THE BAHAMAS' DRUG INTERDICTION STRATEGY PROPOSAL. THE SLIDES, FOR EXAMPLE, SHOWED THE BAHAMAS REQUESTING SIX FRIGATES FOLLOWED BY SLIDE SHOWING "U.S. RESPONSE -- NOT ACCEPTABLE" SUPERIMPOSED ON THE FIRST. ANOTHER THEN FOLLOWED ASSERTING THAT WE OFFERED ONLY TO MOVE TWO HELICOPTERS FROM THE TURKS AND CAICOS TO THE BAHAMAS. THE SLIDE TOTALLY IGNORED ALL OTHER PARTS OF THE PROPOSAL AND THE U.S. RESPONSE. FURTHERMORE, THEY MISREPRESENTED THE ROLE OF THE U.S. IN MAJOR DRUG SEIZURES IN IN 1987. THE SLIDES AND PROFESSIONALLY PREPARED CHARTS ON THE WALLS SHOWING THE PERCENT OF THE BAHAMAS BUDGET DEVOTED TO NARCOTICS INTERDICTION, ARREST FIGURES, ETC., WERE PREPARED BY THE PARRY AND ROMANI PR FIRM THE GCOB HAS EMPLOYED. (TED MEHL, A FORMER ENGLISH STAFFER, AND BOBBY MILLS, A FORMER STAFFER OF SEN. DECONCINI, BOTH PARRY AND ROMANI EMPLOYEES, PARTICIPATED IN THIS AND OTHER MEETINGS WITH BAHAMIAN OFFICIALS.)

7. ADDERLEY'S REMARKS: AFTER THE SLIDE SHOW, ADDERLEY TOLD THE CONGRESSMEN THE BAHAMAS WAS DOING ALL IT CAN DO,CONSIDERING THE VAST EXPANSE OF TERRITORY THAT MUST BE PATROLLED AND URGED THE U.S. CONGRESS TO INSIST THAT MORE RESOURCES BE ALLOCATED TO THE BAHAMAS. HE ALLEGED THAT MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUND IN WASHINGTON BECAUSE STATE DEPARTMENT REPORTS CONTAINED INFORMATION THAT WAS JUST NOT CORRECT. HE ALSO TOLD THE CONGRESSMENT THE U.S. WAS STONEWALLING ON EXTRADITION TREATY NEGOTIATIONS AND LAMENTED THE FACT THAT THE U.S. SENATE HAD NOT APPROVED THE MLAT BEFORE ADJOURNING. ADDERLEY ALSO CLAIMED HE HAD STOPPED A RECENTLY PLANNED FAA INSPECTION OF CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT IN THE BAHAMAS BECAUSE THE U.S. AT THE LAST MOMENT WAS PLANNING TO INCLUDE CUSTOMS PERSONNEL ALONG WITH THE FAA INSPECTORS. THE AMBASSADOR TOLD THE GROUP THAT EXTRADITION NEGOTIATIONS WERE SCHEDULED TO CONTINUE IN JUNE OF THIS YEAR BUT WERE PUT ON HOLD BECAUSE OF ADDERLEY'S ABSENCE DUE TO HIS HEART BYPASS SURGERY, A FACT ADDERLEY DENIED. (COMMENT: AMBASSADOR SUBSEQUENTLY EXPLAINED TO THE CONGRESSMEN LATER THAT ADDERLEY HAD MISREPRESENTED THE FACTS ABOUT THE FAA INSPECTION SINCE THE OPERATIONS PLAN PRESENTED TO HIM MONTHS AGO CLEARLY STATED THAT

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: OREP, PGOV, PREL, SNAR, BF
SUBJECT: CODEL ENGLISH VISIT TO THE BAHAMAS

CUSTOMS PERSONNEL WERE TO JOIN WITH FAA INSPECTORS.) ADDERLEY ALSO URGED CONGRESS TO PASS LEGISLATION TO ALLOW FOR RECIPROCAL CONFISCATORY ORDERS. CONGRESSMAN ENGLISH TOLD ADDERLEY THAT THE U.S. APPRECIATES THE COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE OF THE BAHAMAS BUT THAT THE LEVEL OF THIS ASSISTANCE WAS STILL NOT WIDELY KNOWN IN WASHINGTON. ENGLISH SAID THAT, IN HIS VIEW, CONGRESS WOULD PROBABLY DECERTIFY SOMEBODY, PROBABLY MEXICO, THIS YEAR AND THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE GCOB TO GET ITS MESSAGE ACROSS IN A HURRY. HE PRAISED U.S.-GCOB EFFORTS TO RECONSIDER NEW STRATEGY IDEAS AND URGED THAT A JOINT STRATEGY BE IN PLACE PRIOR TO CERTIFICATION HEARINGS. CONGRESSMAN MCCANDLESS NOTED THE FULL PAGE NEWSPAPER ADS BY THE GCOB CAUSED NEGATIVE REACTION. ADDERLEY CLAIMED HE KNEW THAT, BUT IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO GET PEOPLE'S ATTENTION.

8. PRIME MINISTER BRISTLES: THE CODEL HAD A CHANCE

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88 1337316 SCR PAGE 004 NC 1337316
TOR: 220624Z DEC 88 NASSAU 07075

TO SIT DOWN FOR A BRIEF SESSION WITH PRIME MINISTER PINDLING IN HIS OFFICE WHERE AGAIN ENGLISH SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE BAHAMAS TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO EMPHASIZE THE COOPERATION IT WAS GIVING TO THE U.S. IN THE DRUG WAR. PRIME MINISTER PINDLING, WHO HAD BEEN AFFABLE AND RELAXED AT THE START, BRISTLED AT ENGLISH'S REMARKS AND TOLD ENGLISH THAT THE BAHAMAS HAD BEEN DOING ALL IT COULD DO AND ITS COOPERATIVE EFFORTS SHOULD HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED LONG BEFORE NOW. PINDLING WAS SORRY.THE CODEL WAS UNABLE BECAUSE OF ITS SCHEDULE TO VISIT GEORGE TOWN OR SEE MORE OF THE BAHAMAS. HE TOLD THE CONGRESSMEN, HOWEVER, THAT THEY COULD BE ASSURED THE BAHAMAS WOULD MEET ITS COMMITMENTS AND WOULD CONTINUE TO COOPERATE AS A FULL, WILLING PARTICIPANT IN OPBAT. (NOTE: THE MEETING WITH PINDLING WAS RESTRICTED TO A SMALL GROUP: THE AMBASSADOR AND POLOFF, THE CONGRESSMEN AND TWO STAFFERS. THE BAHAMIANS, HOWEVER, FOUND ROOM FOR LOBBYIST BOBBY MILLS AND ADDERLEY ADVISOR CUSACK TO SQUEEZE IN AND JOIN THE GROUP.)

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9. OTHER ACTIVITIES: BESIDES SUBSTANTIVE MEETINGS, CODEL ALSO TOURED THE ROYAL BAHAMAS DEFENCE FORCE BASE AT CORAL HARBOUR AND INSPECTED BAHAMIAN PATROL VESSELS AND CAPTURED DRUG BOATS AWAITING DISPOSITION. CONGRESSMAN MCCANDLESS ALSO VISITED THE RECENTLY DECOMMISSIONED U.S. COAST GUARD CUTTER WHICH WAS TURNED OVER TO THE BAHAMIANS ON DECEMBER 14. MCCANDLESS REASSURED THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND COMMODORE SMITH THAT THE SHIP WAS IN EXCELLENT CONDITION. THE CODEL ALSO VISITED THE OAKES FIELD OPBAT SITE AND WAS ABLE TO VIEW ONE OF THE TRAINING CLASSES CONDUCTED BY DEA INSTRUCTORS. THE AMBASSADOR HOSTED A LUNCHEON WITH POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS AND A DINNER IN WHICH VARIOUS OTHER BAHAMIAN OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN LAW ENFORCEMENT OR DRUG REHABILITATION EFFORTS PARTICIPATED, THOUGH NONE OF THE MINISTERS INVITED COULD MAKE IT. MILLS EVEN TRIED TO GET HIMSELF IN ON THE DINNER, AND HAD REQUESTED THE GUEST LIST.

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10. COMMENT: THE CODEL HAD A VERY WORTHWHILE VISIT. CONGRESSMAN ENGLISH, WHO HAD VISITED THE BAHAMAS BEFORE, CLEARLY KNEW THE PLAYERS AND WAS AWARE OF THE GCOB'S DRUG WAR ROLE. HE HAD BEEN BRIEFED BY CUSTOMS IN WHAT APPEARED A BLATANT MOVE TO TRY TO GET CONTROL OF OPBAT. FOR CONGRESSMAN MCCANDLESS, THE TRIP PROVIDED A USEFUL VIEW OF THE DIFFICULTIES WE AND THE BAHAMIANS FACE IN OUR JOINT INTERDICTION EFFORTS. THE BAHAMIANS, HOWEVER, PROVED DUPLICITOUS IN THE END BY DENYING THE REQUEST FOR U.S. AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS TO WORK IN NASSAU DURING AN UPCOMING EXERCISE AFTER ASSURING THE CONGRESSMEN THE MATTER WOULD BE HANDLED TO THEIR SATISFACTION. ADDERLEY'S SLIDE SHOW AND THE PRESENCE DURING THE MEETINGS OF MEHL AND MILLS CLEARLY REFLECTS THE GCOB'S INTENTION TO MOUNT A PROFESSIONAL LOBBYING EFFORT ON THE HILL TO WARD OFF DECERTIFICATION, AND THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD REALIZE THAT THIS GOVERNMENT WILL WILLFULLY MISREPRESENT OUR POSITIONS WHENEVER IT THINKS IT WILL SERVE ITS PURPOSE.

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Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2013/01/11 : CIA-RDP90M00005R001000080001-7

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88 1337316 SCR PAGE 005 NC 1337316
TOR: 220624Z DEC 88 NASSAU 07075

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11. OF CONCERN, HOWEVER, IS THE IMPRESSION ENGLISH LEFT WITH THE BAHAMIANS THAT SOMEBODY (MEXICO) WILL BE DECERTIFIED, BUT PROBABLY NOT THEM. IF IN FACT A DECERTIFICATION IS COMING, WE SUSPECT THE CONGRESS MIGHT BE HESITANT TO MOVE AGAINST MEXICO GIVEN OUR LATIN DEBT CONCERNS, NOT TO MENTION THE SUPPORT SUCH ACTION COULD GIVE TO NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT SALINAS' OPPONENTS WHICH MIGHT PROMPT FURTHER DOMESTIC UP-HEAVALS. THE EASY WAY OUT IN OUR VIEW WOULD BE TO VOTE AGAINST THE BAHAMAS DESPITE THE GCOB'S OPBAT COOPERATION AND PARTICIPATION. THE BAHAMIANS SHOULD TAKE NOTHING FOR GRANTED AND WE WILL TRY WITH OUR COUNTERPARTS TO DEFLATE, TACTFULLY ANY FALSE EXPECTA-TIONS THAT MAY HAVE ARISEN. END COMMENT. HALLETT

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